

§ 1.527

38 CFR Ch. I (7–1–15 Edition)

Activity	Fees
(iv) Providing special information, statistics, reports, drawings, specifications, lists of names and addresses (either in paper or machine readable form), computer or other machine readable output.	Actual cost to the Agency including computer and manual search costs, copying costs, labor, and material and overhead expenses.
(v) Attestation under the seal of the Agency	\$3.00 per document so certified.
(vi) Providing abstracts or copies of medical and dental records to insurance companies for other than litigation purposes.	\$10.00 per request.
(vii) Providing files under court subpoena	Actual direct cost to the Agency.

(NOTE. If VA regularly contracts for duplicating services related to providing the requested records, such as the duplication of microfilm or architect's plans and drawings, the contractor fees may be included in the actual direct cost to the Agency)

(2) *Benefit records.* When VA benefit records are requested by a VA beneficiary or applicant for VA benefits, the duplication fee for one complete set of such records will be waived.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5702(b))

(j) If the copy is to be transmitted by certified or registered mail, airmail, or special delivery mail, the postal fees therefor shall be added to the other fees provided in paragraph (i) of this section (or the order must include postage stamps or stamped return envelopes for the purpose).

(k) Those Department of Veterans Affairs installations not having copying equipment are authorized to arrange with the nearest Department of Veterans Affairs installation having such equipment to make the necessary authorized copies of records or documents.

(l) Administration, staff office, and field facility heads are authorized to designate employees to certify copies of records and papers furnished under the provisions of paragraph (a) of this section.

[19 FR 3224, June 2, 1954, as amended at 32 FR 10850, July 25, 1967; 33 FR 9342, June 26, 1968; 35 FR 20001, Dec. 31, 1970; 37 FR 2676, Feb. 4, 1972; 39 FR 3938, Jan. 31, 1974; 53 FR 10376, Mar. 31, 1988; 54 FR 34980, Aug. 23, 1989]

§ 1.527 Administrative review.

(a) Any person may, in the event of a denial of his or her request to inspect or obtain information from or copies of records within the purview of §§1.501 through 1.526, appeal such denial. Such appeal, stating the circumstances of the denial, should be addressed, as appropriate, to the field facility, administration, or staff office head.

(b) A denial action not reversed by a field facility, administration, or staff office head on appeal, will be referred through normal channels to the General Counsel.

(c) The final agency decision in such appeals will be made by the General Counsel or the Deputy General Counsel.

[32 FR 10850, July 25, 1967, as amended at 55 FR 21546, May 25, 1990]

PROCEDURES FOR DISCLOSURE OF RECORDS UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

§ 1.550 Purpose.

(a) Sections 1.550 through 1.562 contain the rules followed by VA in processing requests for records under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. 552, as amended. These regulations should be read together with the FOIA, which provides the underlying legal basis for the regulations and other information regarding requests for records in the custody of a Federal agency. The regulations also should be read together with VA's FOIA Reference Guide, available on VA's FOIA home page (see §1.552(a) for the pertinent Internet address) and FOIA fee guidance provided by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Uniform Freedom of Information Act Fee Schedule and Guidelines, available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/omb/inforeg/foia_fee_schedule_1987.pdf.

(b) Requests for records about an individual protected by the Privacy Act, 5 U.S.C. 552a, including one's own records and records that pertain to an individual and that may be sensitive, will be processed under the FOIA and

Department of Veterans Affairs

§ 1.551

the Privacy Act. In addition to the following FOIA regulations, see §§1.575 through 1.584 for regulations applicable to Privacy Act records.

(c) Requests for records relating to a claim administered by VA pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 5701 will be processed under the FOIA and 38 U.S.C. 5701. In addition to the following FOIA regulations, see §§1.500 through 1.527 for regulations implementing 38 U.S.C. 5701.

(d) Requests for records relating to healthcare quality assurance reviews pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 5705 will be processed under the FOIA and 38 U.S.C. 5705. In addition to the following FOIA regulations, see 38 CFR 17.500 through 17.511 for regulations implementing 38 U.S.C. 5705.

(e) Requests for records relating to treatment for the conditions specified in 38 U.S.C. 7332, such as drug abuse, alcoholism or alcohol abuse, infection with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), or sickle cell anemia, will be processed under the FOIA and 38 U.S.C. 7332. In addition to the following FOIA regulations, see §§1.460 through 1.499 of this part for regulations implementing 38 U.S.C. 7332.

(Authority: Sections 1.550 to 1.562 issued under 72 Stat. 1114; 38 U.S.C. 501, 552, 552a, 5701, 5705, 7332.)G1986

[76 FR 51892, Aug. 19, 2011]

§ 1.551 Definitions.

As used in §§1.550 through 1.562, the following definitions apply:

Agency means any executive department, military department, government corporation, government controlled corporation, or other establishment in the executive branch of the Federal government, or independent regulatory entity.

Appeal means a requester's written disagreement with an adverse determination under the FOIA.

Beneficiary means a veteran or other individual who has received benefits (including medical benefits) or has applied for benefits pursuant to title 38, United States Code.

Benefits records means an individual's records, which pertain to programs under any of the benefits laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

Business day means the time during which typical Federal government offices are open for normal business. It does not include Saturdays, Sundays, or Federal legal public holidays. The term "day" means business day unless otherwise specified.

Business information means confidential or privileged commercial or financial information obtained by VA from a submitter that may be protected from disclosure under Exemption 4 of the FOIA, 5 U.S.C. 552(b)(4).

Component means each distinct VA entity, including Administrations, staff offices, services, or facilities.

Expedited processing means giving a FOIA request priority for processing ahead of other pending requests because VA has determined that the requester has shown an exceptional need or urgency for the records as provided in these regulations.

Fees. For fees and fee-related definitions, see §1.561.

FOIA Officer means the individual within a VA component whose responsibilities include addressing and granting or denying requests for records under the FOIA.

Perfected request means a written FOIA request that meets the requirements set forth in §1.554 of this part and for which there are no remaining issues about the payment of applicable fees or any other matter that requires resolution prior to processing.

Reading room means space made available, as needed, in VA components where records are available for review pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(2). Ordinarily, the VA component providing a public reading room space will be the component that maintains the record.

Record means a document, a portion of a document, and information contained within a document, and can include information derived from a document or a database. Such documents may be maintained in paper, electronic, and other forms, but do not include objects, such as tissue slides, blood samples, or computer hardware.

Request means a written demand for records under the FOIA as described below. The term *request* includes any action emanating from the initial demand for records, including an appeal related to the initial demand.